



COTTING SCHOOL

Serving Children with Physical, Communication, and Other Challenges to Learning

January 15, 2021

Dear Cotting Community,

I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to serve as Cotting School's 7th President. That I am only the 7th head of school in 128 years is a testament to the tradition of dedicated leadership at the school. Like Dave Manzo, Carl Mores and those who have come before me, I will work hard to honor Cotting School's strong history, while embracing the spirit of excellence and innovation that continuously improves the services we offer students with special needs each year.

My admiration and affection for the school began in 2005 while I was a volunteer to Cotting while working in the financial services industry. Interviewing a number of Cotting staff members, many of whom are still my colleagues today, I was struck by their intelligence, commitment, professionalism, compassion and talent. That impression has only deepened during the last 15 years as I have had the privilege of working with, and learning from, so many talented teachers, therapists, nurses, program assistants and staff who all contribute their distinct talents to making Cotting the special place it is.



Cotting has been blessed with a wise and thoughtful Board as well as a strong Senior Administrative team. They have been examples of stewardship, entrepreneurship, integrity, accountability, and innovation from my first introduction to Cotting School. Throughout Cotting's long history, and especially this past year, they have worked together to balance the important foundation that characterizes the Cotting School experience with a nimbleness and flexibility to respond to both individualized needs and evolving program demands. I have been honored to be part of that team and look forward to building on our continuity and strategic planning to offer a highly specialized education to extraordinary students. I am excited to further explore creative ways for us to reach students beyond our campus so that we are not just a center of excellence in Lexington, but share our expertise with students, families and professionals throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The greatest joy in my role at Cotting, however, has been watching our students flourish. The tenacity and enthusiasm they bring to their learning is only outsized by their compassion and encouragement of their peers. It is their spirit of acceptance and determination that creates the strong sense of belonging that is the "Cotting Way." These students deserve a comprehensive program that allows them to pursue their unique goals for independence.

The Cotting School mission is at the core of my work. Each decision in support of students, families, and staff is with that mission in mind. I look forward to furthering Cotting School's partnership with parents, districts, donors and long-standing friends who contribute their considerable time and talents to our students. Together, we are dedicated to the academic, therapeutic, technological and social excellence that differentiates the Cotting School experience.

With deepest gratitude,

Bridget Irish
Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of Cotting School

A Tradition of Innovation and Excellence Since 1893

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